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I'M CHANGING CHANGING INTO SOMETHING--
--LESS THAN HUMAN--!
--AND ONLY THIS GIRL KNOWS THE SECRET THAT CAN SAVE ME!
IN THIS ISSUE: YOU AND GHOST RIDER WILL FACE--
THE MENACE OF THE SECOND ZODIAC!
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Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE GHOST RIDER!
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GARY FRIEDRICH CONCEPT
JIM MOONEY ARTIST
SAL TRAPANI INKER
LETTERED BY ARTIE SIMEK
COLORED BY PHIL RACHE
ROY THOMAS EDITOR
SAN FRANCISCO:
LATE THE HOME OF DAREDEVIL AND THE BLACK WIDOW.
BUT THEY ARE ABSENT FROM THE CITY TONIGHT, LEAVING BUT ONE COSTUMED FIGURE TO PROWL ITS OCEAN-KISSED STREETS.
HIS NAME IS LEO.
AND HIS PRESENCE HERE WOULD BE EASY TO EXPLAIN...
NO PARKI
...WERE HE NOT KNOWN TO BE BEHIND BARS!
ZODIAC II
*HOLD IT! DIDN'T THE AVENGERS PUT ZODIAC AWAY IN ISH #123 OF THEIR OWN MAG? JUST TWO MONTHS AGO? HANG ON TO YOUR GEARSHIFTS, HEROES 'CAUSE WE'VE GOT A FEW MORE SURPRISES FOR YOU ON THE WAY TO PAGE 32!
GENTLEMEN, START YOUR ENGINES!

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HEY, BRENT, I BETCHA NEVER THOUGHT WE WERE DRIVIN' THESE RIGS FOR SUCH A HIGH-POWERED OUTFIT, HUH?
YEAH, HOW 'BOUT THAT, TOMMY? VAN LUNT TURNS OUT TO BE TAURUS OF THE ZODIAC BUNCH AND GETS LOCKED AWAY IN SOME TOP SECURITY PRISON BY THE AVENGERS!
AND HE STILL HAS ENOUGH PULL TO GET A HUNDRED THOU SENT EAST FOR HIS DEFENSE FUND--JUST BY PASSING THE WORD THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE!
TOMMY, THAT'S MY KIND OF BOSS!
BUT IT WOULD SEEM, FRIEND DRIVER, THAT THERE ARE THOSE WHO DO NOT SHARE YOUR HIGH REGARD FOR CORNELIUS VAN LUNT.
TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE MAN WHO LEERS TO THE TOP OF YOUR VEHICLE AS THE SALTY OCEAN AIR WHIPS AT HIS LION'S MANE.
HE APPEARS THE LIVING INCARNATION OF THE ZODIACAL SIGN REPRESENTED BY THE LION.
BUT HE IS NOT WHAT HE APPEARS TO BE.
BRENT! SOMETHING'S LANDED ON THE TOP OF THE TRUCK!
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
WE'RE STILL ON THE BRIDGE!
IMPOSSIBLE BUT TRUE, WE WOULD HAZARD TO GUESS!
EXIT
AS TRUE AS THE STEELY CLAWS THAT LITERALLY RIP OPEN THE ROOF OF VAN LUNT'S TRAVELING MONEY BIN!
SCREEGH!

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WE BOTH HEARD SOMETHING FALL ON THE TRUCK, TOMMY! I KNOW WE DID! BUT WHAT THE HECK WAS IT?!
VAN LUNT ARMORED TRUCK SERVICE
THERE'S NOTHING AROUND HERE. WE'D BETTER CHECK ON THE MONEY! VAN LUNT'LL HAVE OUR SKINS IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO IT!
THEN PREPARE TO LOSE YOUR PELT, DOLT! THIS FORTUNE SHALL NOT BE USED TO FREE VAN LUNT FROM HIS WELL-DESERVED FATE!
THAT IS THE COMMAND OF LEO!
BUT--BUT-- YOU'RE STILL IN JAIL! WITH THE REST OF THE ZODIAC!
SWAPP!
:UGHN!:
CRUNCH!
SCREECK!
:EEYAGGHNHH!:
PERHAPS IT'S BEST YOU BELIEVE THAT, COWARDLY ONE...
...FOR THE TRUTH OF THIS ENCOUNTER WOULD LEAVE YOU BABBLING IN THE STREET, YOUR VERY SOUL SHRIVELED LIKE A RAISIN!
BRING THE CRAFT DOWN, FRIEND SLIFER. WE ARE NEARLY FINISHED HERE...
...BUT WE HAVE OTHER PLACES TO GO, OTHER DEBTS TO PAY BACK IN FULL!
AND, BELIEVE ME, THEY WILL BE PAID BACK-- IN FULL!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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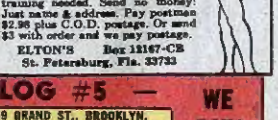

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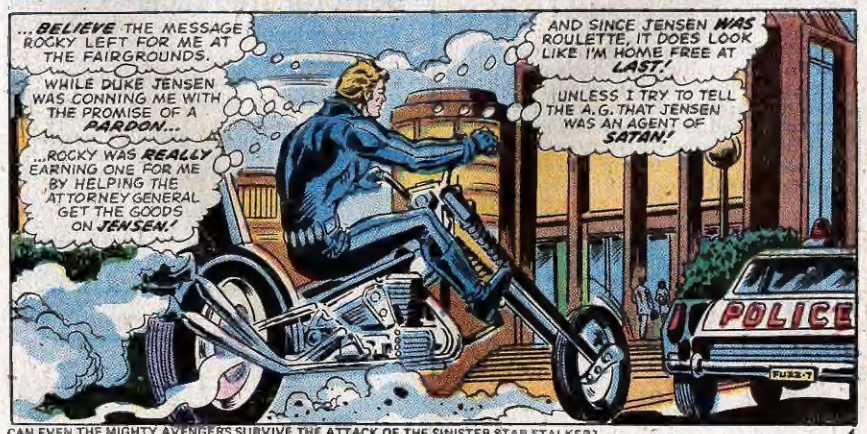
LAS VEGAS: 400 MILES AND SEVERAL HOURS FROM THE MAYHEM WE HAVE JUST WITNESSED, BUT WHERE ANOTHER ALSO REFLECTS ON DEBTS AND THE PAYMENT THEREOF.
HIS NAME IS JOHNNY BLAZE.
AND THOUGH HE IS UNDENIABLY GUILTY OF OFFENSES RANGING FROM RECKLESS DRIVING TO CAR THEFT...
...HE FEELS HE HAS PAID FOR THESE CRIMES BY DEFEATING THE LEERING DEMON CALLED ROULETTE.*
LAST ISSUE. --ROY.
DUNES
CASINO
THE ONLY CATCH IS: WHO WOULD...


...BELIEVE THE MESSAGE ROCKY LEFT FOR ME AT THE FAIRGROUNDS.
WHILE DUKE JENSEN WAS CONNING ME WITH THE PROMISE OF A PARDON...
...ROCKY WAS REALLY EARNING ONE FOR ME BY HELPING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL GET THE GOODS ON JENSEN!
AND SINCE JENSEN WAS ROULETTE, IT DOES LOOK LIKE I'M HOME FREE AT LAST!
UNLESS I TRY TO TELL THE A.G. THAT JENSEN WAS AN AGENT OF SATAN!
POLICE

CAN EVEN THE MIGHTY AVENGERS SURVIVE THE ATTACK OF THE SINISTER STAR STALKER?

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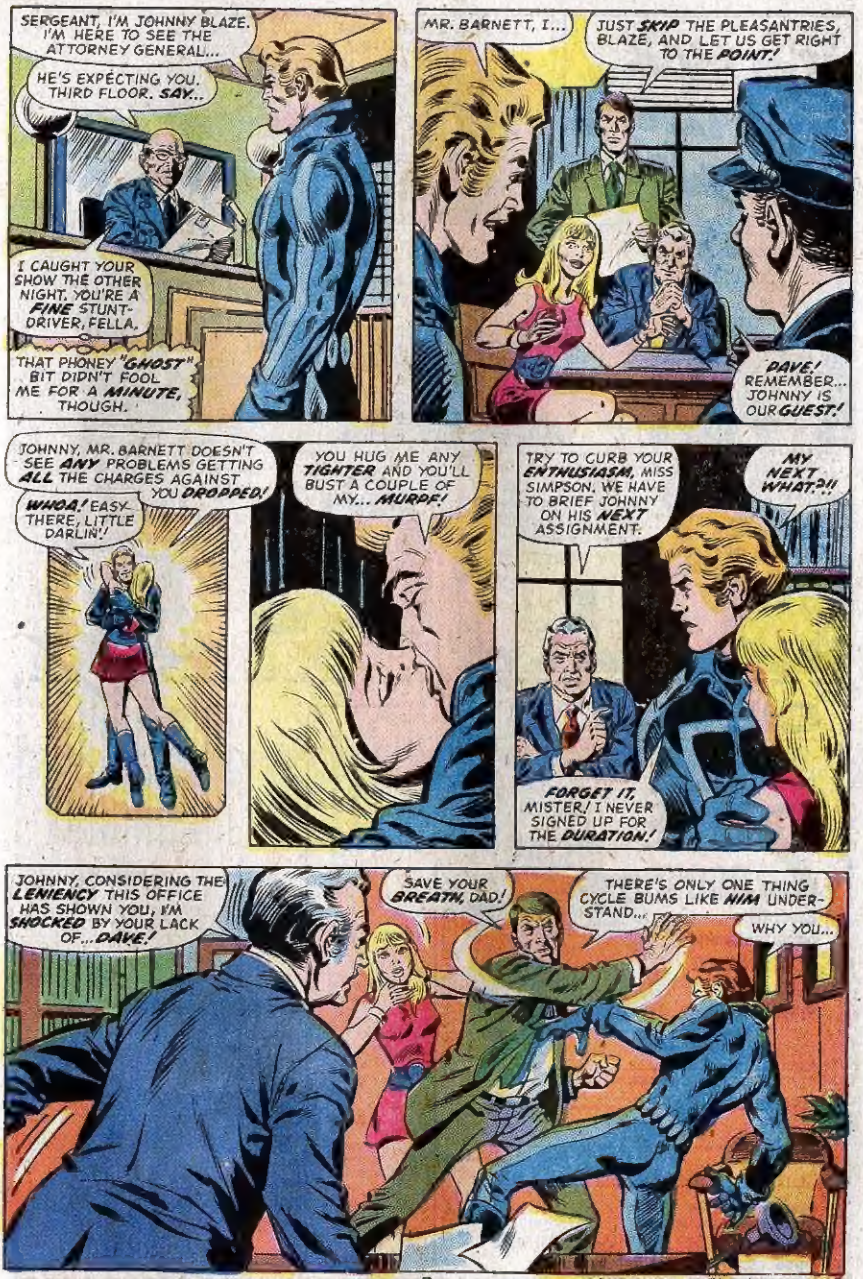
SERGEANT, I'M JOHNNY BLAZE. I'M HERE TO SEE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL...
HE'S EXPECTING YOU. THIRD FLOOR. SAY..
I CAUGHT YOUR SHOW THE OTHER NIGHT. YOU'RE A FINE STUNT-DRIVER, FELLA.
THAT PHONEY "GHOST" BIT DIDN'T FOOL ME FOR A MINUTE, THOUGH.
MR. BARNETT, I...
JUST SKIP THE PLEASANTRIES, BLAZE, AND LET US GET RIGHT TO THE POINT!
DAVE! REMEMBER... JOHNNY IS OUR GUEST!
JOHNNY, MR. BARNETT DOESN'T SEE ANY PROBLEMS GETTING ALL THE CHARGES AGAINST YOU DROPPED!
WHOA! EASY-THERE, LITTLE DARLIN'!
YOU HUG ME ANY TIGHTER AND YOU'LL BUST A COUPLE OF MY... MURPF!
TRY TO CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM, MISS SIMPSON. WE HAVE TO BRIEF JOHNNY ON HIS NEXT ASSIGNMENT.
MY NEXT WHAT?!!
FORGET IT, MISTER! I NEVER SIGNED UP FOR THE DURATION!
JOHNNY, CONSIDERING THE LENIENCY THIS OFFICE HAS SHOWN YOU, I'M SHOCKED BY YOUR LACK OF... DAVE!
SAVE YOUR BREATH, DAD!
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING CYCLE BUMS LIKE HIM UNDER-STAND...
WHY YOU...

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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"I'm sick and tired of my Job!"

PLEASE, DEAR. BESIDES, WE DON'T GET OUT THAT OFTEN...
OH, ALL RIGHT
LATER
SAY, JIM AND HELEN HAVE A NICE PLACE HERE. WONDER WHERE HE GETS THE MONEY?
OH, JIM IS IN ELECTRONICS NOW

YOU SEEM MIGHTY HAPPY IN ELECTRONICS, JIM. LEVEL WITH ME - HOW'D YOU BREAK IN?
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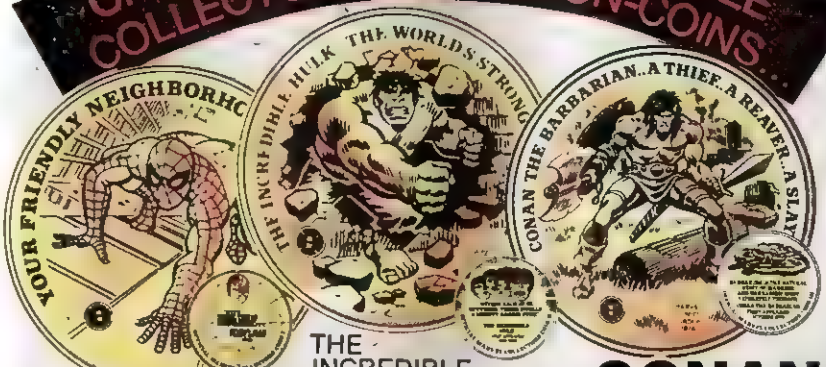

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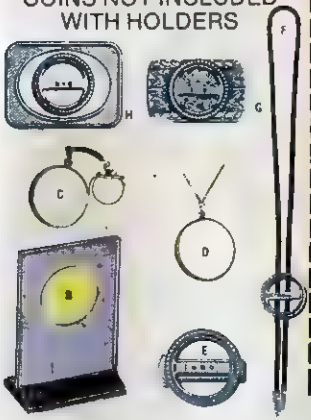

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LET ME AT HIM, DAD! BY THE TIME I'M DONE WITH HIM, HE'LL BE BEGGIN' TO HELP US!
BACK OFF! BOTH OF YOU!
JOHNNY, I APOLOGIZE FOR MY SON.
AND THAT'S SUPPOSED TO MAKE IT OKAY?
PLEASE LISTEN TO MR. BARNETT, DARLING. THIS IS A CHANCE TO REALLY HELP A LOT OF PEOPLE.
TOUCHING, LADY. BUT HE'S GOT NO CHOICE. WE'VE ONLY GOT HIS WORD THAT ROULETTE'S BEEN PUT AWAY..
...AND WHO'S GONNA BELIEVE A CYCLE TRAMP?
THAT TEARS IT!
A COUPLE HOURS AGO, I ALMOST GOT KILLED KEEPING JENSEN FROM FRYIN' THE CITY TO A CRISP! AND NOW YOU TELL ME THAT ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH?!
WELL, IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME! IF YOU DISAGREE, YOU CAN SEND YOUR MEN TO THE FAIRGROUNDS AFTER ME!
BUT MAKE SURE THEY'RE WELL-ARMED!
MAYBE YOU DIDN'T HEAR ME RIGHT, PUNK! I SAID YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHOICE IN THE MATTER.
MAYBE IT'S JUST THAT YOUR DICTION IMPROVED 100% THIS VERY MINUTE.

DEATH WAITS FOR DR. STRANGE— WITHIN THE AWESOME EYE OF AGAMOTTO!

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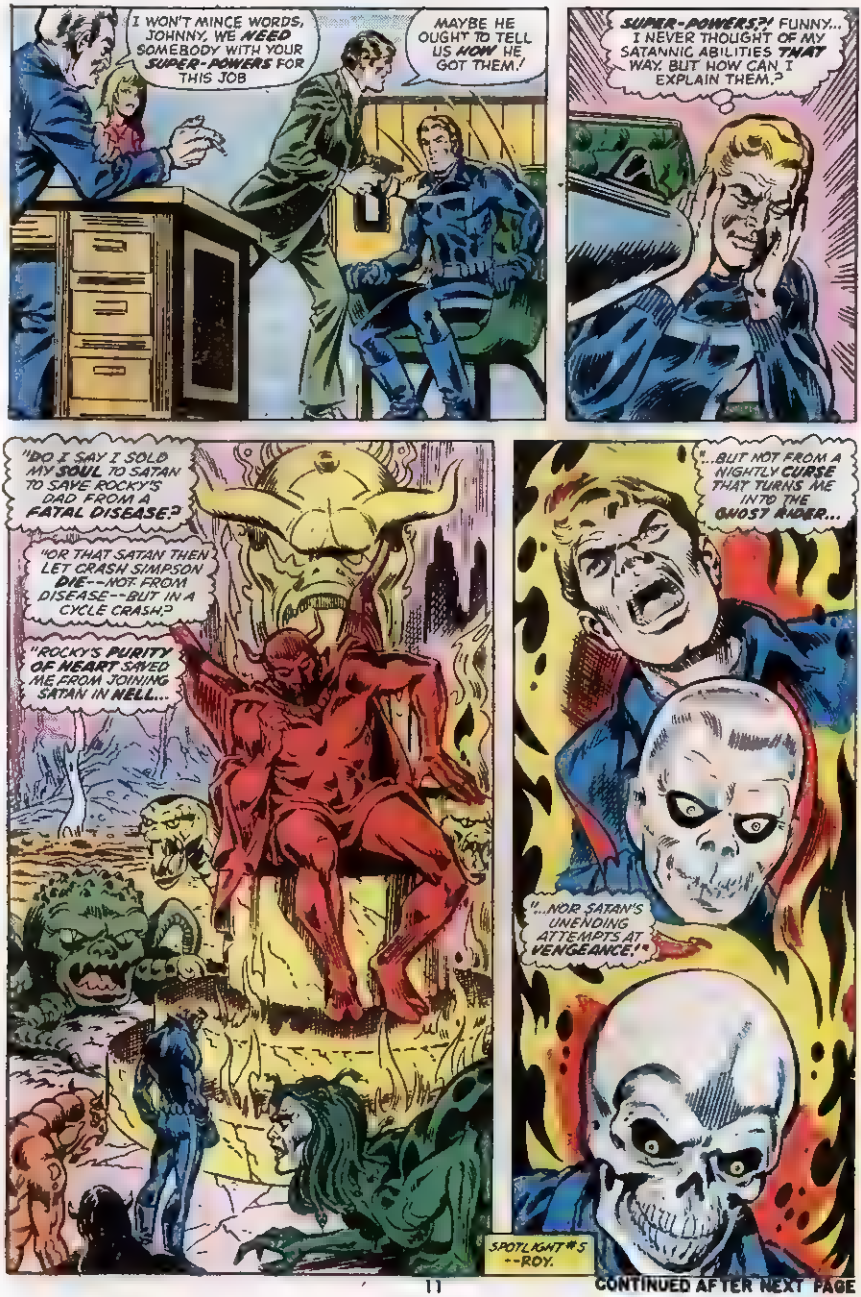
I WON'T MINCE WORDS, JOHNNY, WE NEED SOMEBODY WITH YOUR SUPER-POWERS FOR THIS JOB
MAYBE HE OUGHT TO TELL US HOW HE GOT THEM!
SUPER-POWERS?! FUNNY... I NEVER THOUGHT OF MY SATANNIC ABILITIES THAT WAY. BUT HOW CAN I EXPLAIN THEM.?
"DO I SAY I SOLD MY SOUL TO SATAN TO SAVE ROCKY'S DAD FROM A FATAL DISEASE?
"OR THAT SATAN THEN LET CRASH SIMPSON DIE--NOT FROM DISEASE--BUT IN A CYCLE CRASH?
"ROCKY'S PURITY OF HEART SAVED ME FROM JOINING SATAN IN HELL...
"...BUT NOT FROM A NIGHTLY CURSE THAT TURNS ME INTO THE GHOST RIDER...
"...NOR SATAN'S UNENDING ATTEMPTS AT VENGEANCE!"
SPOTLIGHT #5 --ROY.

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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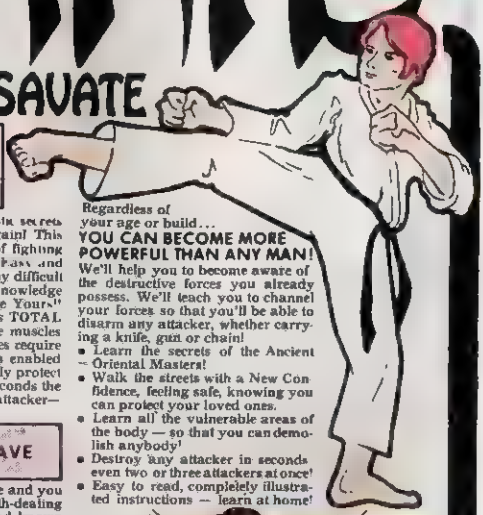
KARATE

JUDO-JIU-JITSU-SAVATE



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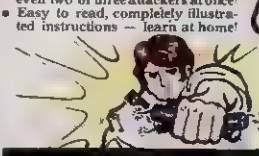

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"I STILL REMEMBER BATTLING CRASH SIMPSON AFTER SATAN RESTORED HIM TO LIFE! HOW CAN EVEN LUCIFER TURN A FATHER AGAINST HIS CHILD THAT WAY?"
*MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #6-8 --R.T.
"SATAN ALWAYS GOES AFTER POOR MY ONLY PROTECTION AGAINST HIM LIKE WHEN THE INDIAN WITCH-MAN ALMOST KILLED HER."
*MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #8-10 --R.T.
"I SAVED HER, BUT NEARLY GOT MYSELF WASTED. AS JOHNNY BLAZE BULLETS CAN FINISH ME."
SLICE
*GHOST RIDER #1 --R.T.
"SATAN COULDN'T EVEN WAIT FOR ME TO DIE FROM THOSE WOUNDS...
"...HE SENT A LADY NAMED WITCH-WOMAN TO LURE ME TO HELL."
*GHOST RIDER #2 R.T.
"...IN AN IMPROMPTU CIVIL WAR BETWEEN SATAN AND HIS SON SAVED MY HASH THAT TIME."
*MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #12 --R.T.
I SURVIVED THE BULLET WOUNDS AFTER ALL, BUT IF I TELL THEM I'M YOUR BASIC EMISSARY OF HELL, THEY'LL PUT ME AWAY FOR KEEPS. SO...
SUPER-POWERS?! YOU MEAN THOSE CORNY SLEIGHT-OF-HAND TRICKS I USE IN THE SHOW?
YOU'RE PUTTING ME ON!
THE SECRET EMPIRE IS BACK! AND THIS TIME, NOT EVEN CAPTAIN AMERICA CAN STOP THEM!

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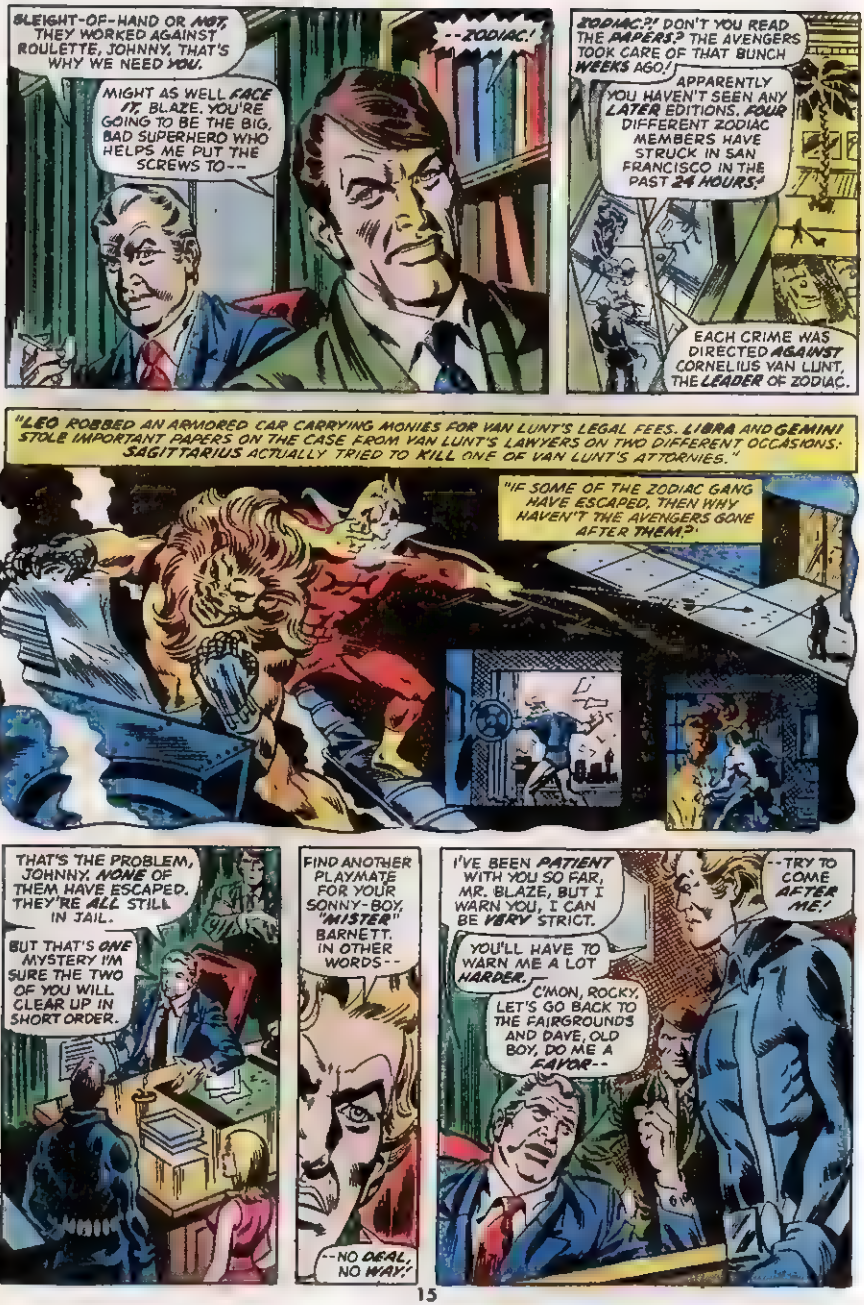
SLEIGHT-OF-HAND OR NOT, THEY WORKED AGAINST ROULETTE, JOHNNY, THAT'S WHY WE NEED YOU.
MIGHT AS WELL FACE IT, BLAZE. YOU'RE GOING TO BE THE BIG, BAD SUPERHERO WHO HELPS ME PUT THE SCREWS TO--
--ZODIAC!
ZODIAC?! DON'T YOU READ THE PAPERS? THE AVENGERS TOOK CARE OF THAT BUNCH WEEKS AGO!
APPARENTLY YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANY LATER EDITIONS. FOUR DIFFERENT ZODIAC MEMBERS HAVE STRUCK IN SAN FRANCISCO IN THE PAST 24 HOURS!
EACH CRIME WAS DIRECTED AGAINST CORNELIUS VAN LUNT, THE LEADER OF ZODIAC.
"LEO ROBBED AN ARMORED CAR CARRYING MONIES FOR VAN LUNT'S LEGAL FEES. LIBRA AND GEMINI STOLE IMPORTANT PAPERS ON THE CASE FROM VAN LUNT'S LAWYERS ON TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS. SAGITTARIUS ACTUALLY TRIED TO KILL ONE OF VAN LUNT'S ATTORNIES."
"IF SOME OF THE ZODIAC GANG HAVE ESCAPED, THEN WHY HAVEN'T THE AVENGERS GONE AFTER THEM?"
THAT'S THE PROBLEM, JOHNNY. NONE OF THEM HAVE ESCAPED. THEY'RE ALL STILL IN JAIL.
BUT THAT'S ONE MYSTERY I'M SURE THE TWO OF YOU WILL CLEAR UP IN SHORT ORDER.
FIND ANOTHER PLAYMATE FOR YOUR SONNY-BOY, "MISTER" BARNETT. IN OTHER WORDS--
--NO DEAL, NO WAY!
I'VE BEEN PATIENT WITH YOU SO FAR, MR. BLAZE, BUT I WARN YOU, I CAN BE VERY STRICT.
YOU'LL HAVE TO WARN ME A LOT HARDER.
C'MON, ROCKY, LET'S GO BACK TO THE FAIRGROUNDS AND DAVE, OLD BOY, DO ME A FAVOR--
--TRY TO COME AFTER ME!

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EVENING: FOR SOME, AN END TO DAY'S LABORS FOR OTHERS, THE BEGINNING...
...OF A NIGHTLY CURSE!
JOHNNY, WILL IT ALWAYS BE LIKE THIS? WON'T WE EVER BEAT SATAN'S POWER?
I DON'T KNOW, ROCKY MAYBE ALL WE CAN EVER HOPE FOR ARE MOMENTS LIKE THESE--
ALONE, TOGETHER, WITH NO ONE TO COME BETWEEN US
OF COURSE, MAYBE WE WON'T EVEN HAVE THOSE UNLESS WE GET OUR ROAD SHOW BACK ON ITS FEET. WE NEED SOME NEW STUNTS!
SAY, THIS CYCLE REALLY FEELS GOOD UNDER ME. I THINK I LIKE IT BETTER THAN THE FLAME-JOBBY I'VE BEEN USING
STAND BACK, ROCKY. I'M GOING TO TRY HER OUT!
BLAM!

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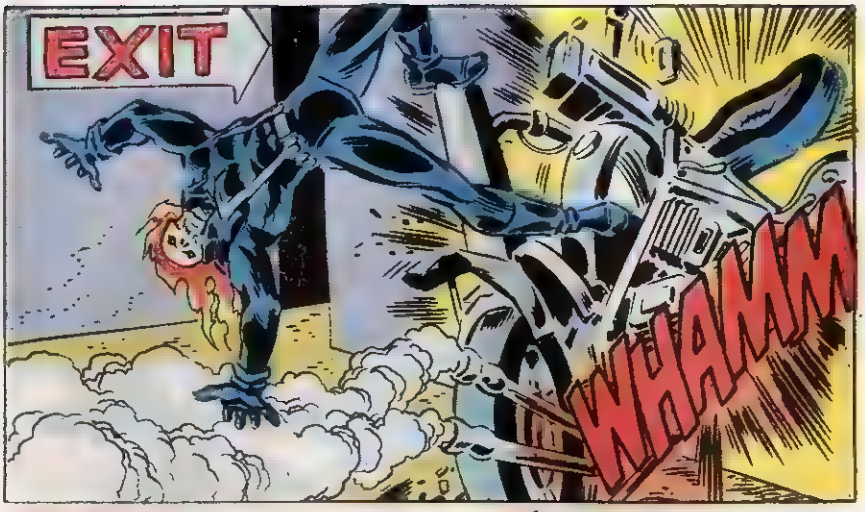

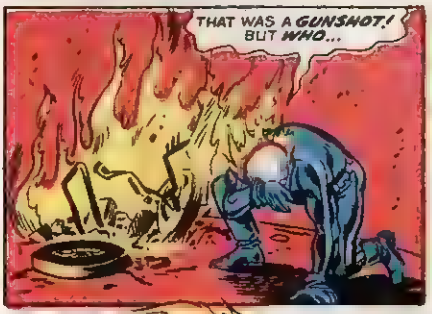

DAVE BARNETT, YOU WERE WARNED NOT TO MEDDLE IN MY AFFAIRS!
STUFF IT, BLAZE! IT'S GOOD SLEIGHT-OF-HAND, BUT IT ISN'T THAT GOOD! YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE AT A PAROLE--

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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GHOST WRITERS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM STAN, ROY, AND MARVEL COMICS

By the time this message appears in any of our mags, you'll already have noticed that all of our 36-page comic magazines are now 25¢— a nickel more than they were a few short weeks ago.

Maybe your first reaction to the price hike was the same as ours might be if we were in your shoes: "What's Marvel trying to do to us, anyway? Don't they know we've got enough troubles, what with inflation, shortages, and an energy crisis on our hands, without trying to clip us for 5¢ more every time we want a little fantasy-filled escape from it all? What is this— some kind of rip-off, so that Stan and Roy can vacation on the Riviera this year?"

If that was your reaction, it's an understandable one— and we'd just like to ask you to listen to our side of it for a minute before you decide.

This year, the widely-publicized paper shortage(in addition to various labor settlements among the companies that print, sell, and distribute Marvel Comics) caused additional expenses to Marvel of several hundred thousand dollars. That means that we had to make that much extra money just to stay even, despite the fact that our sales in 1973 were the best in the business.

So, we had no choice, really, but to increase the cover price of our magazines, the same way that just about everybody else has to.

And, just in case you think we're now getting rich off that new-found nickel: Believe it or not, that extra copper only covers about half the cost of the paper strike and other shortages.

What're we doing about the whole situation?

We think the answer's obvious, if you take a look at some of the titles we're now publishing besides our 36-pagers. There's our increasingly popular 75¢ line of full-scale magazines, first of all. Already, our four flagship 75-centers are being joined by THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU and the return (on March 26) of SAVAGE TALES— with two or three more much-requested types of mags already in the works.

Likewise, there's our spanking new, sensational 35¢ giant-size comics— a full 52 pages of colorful cavorting, and now a bigger bargain than ever!

Not only that, but the next few weeks will herald the coming of a brand new Marvel phenomenon: our swingin' SUPER-GIANTS, featuring one hundred big pages for just 60¢ including a feature-length new tale each and every issue. The Bullpen Bulletins Pages will give you the full scam, next time around— but rest assured that you're gonna be getting your money's worth!

Not only that— but we've got other plans we can't even hint at yet!

Well, that's about it. We've had our say.

About the only other thing we can do is to affirm once more that, just as we've been doing for over a decade now, every artist and writer in the Bullpen will be striving night and day, even harder than ever (if that's possible), to see to it that you consider— each precious coin spent on a Marvel mag to be one of the wisest investments you ever made.

Let's lick this thing together, okay?

Thanks for listening.

Dear Company,

I just got through reading GHOST RIDER #4, and I must admit it was superbly done. Gary did a great job on writing this issue, and I can't wait until #5 comes out!

But I didn't write to you guys solely to compliment you. I also wrote to ask about the mistake you made on page thirty — to find out whether or not it was a mistake. In panel four, Johnny Blaze's motorcycle suddenly goes dead. BUT HOW CAN A CYCLE MADE ENTIRELY FROM FLAME JUST SUDDENLY STOP??? If Ghost Rider can jump off a ramp at least forty feet up in the air without breaking a single part of the cycle— because it's made out of fire (which Johnny himself stated on the last page of G.R. #3)— then there is absolutely no reason for a cycle made from hellfire to go PFFFT!

Now that I got that off my chest, let me say that I hope you start publishing GHOST RIDER monthly, because I think it's a fabulous mag. And I'll never stop buying it.

Wayne Klesmer
Caldwell, N.J.

Never, Wayne? Really? Not ever? Not even for dinner? You're just gonna stand around for the rest of your life and never stop buying this mag? Wow! Like, we knew we had some faithful fans out there, but—! (No offense, Wayne. We're just kidding around. And stalling for time while we try to dope out an answer to the question you've posed. Only trouble is.... we don't have an answer. About the best we can do is, "Satan works in strange and mysterious ways," which isn't very satisfying and borders on blasphemy besides. So suppose we just award you a no-prize for noticing that that particular phenomenon does seem to be out of order— and concommitantly offer a no-prize to any reader who can explain it?)

Dear Roy, Gary, Jim, & Tom.

One of Marvel's biggest successes of the year is GHOST RIDER. Johnny Blaze is the ultimate in man's constant battle in the war between good and evil. Though Johnny succumbed to evil's temptation in order to save Crash Simpson, his reason was not totally evil, thus putting his soul not exactly in the grip of Satan. This, and the purity of soul and the love of Roxanne, give Ghost Rider leverage with which to do battle against Satan for his soul.

This makes Johnny neither a hero nor a villain, but a human being trying to save his soul. The question on your masthead ("Is He Alive— Or Dead?") is thus answered. Johnny Blaze is alive and fighting both during the night and during the day.

By the way, for those readers who wonder about the relationship of Satan as portrayed in GHOST RIDER and Mephistopheles, there is an explanation. In the Bible, it is said that Satan has many names and identities, not just one.

George A. Williams
Rt. 1, Box 153
Varnado, La. 70467

We agree with your explanation of the many faces of Satan, George, and you'll find further elaboration on that theme in the current MARVEL SPOTLIGHT, starring Daimon Hellstrom, the SON OF SATAN. If you're interested in Satanism, the occult, and some of the oddest superhero dilemmas ever to appear in a comic mag— we urge you to get into this wild new strip.

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Meanwhile, getting back to subject of GHOST RIDER, George's view is certainly not the only view of Johnny Blaze's role in the great cosmic drama. George sees him as a human being, caught in the middle of the war between Heaven and Hell, good and evil, light and darkness.

The correspondent whose letter follows, sees the situation somewhat differently...

Dear Sirs,

For my money, Johnny Blaze is no hero, he's a villain — and I wish Spider-Man or Iron Man or Captain America would put an end to his career.

To begin with, selling your soul to Satan is not the most honorable of acts, no matter what the motivation. Such an act is supposed to be evil, and I've been wondering how good could come out of such evil. Answer: it hasn't. Johnny Blaze may have been good once, but now he's been corrupted, and he's as bad as some of your regular villains. Here are some of your misdeeds.

In MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #10, Ghost Rider risked killing two policemen who were trying to stop him for reckless driving. He wasn't driving recklessly for some heroic purpose, but because he was upset over Roxanne's illness. Would you like all your readers to go racing down public streets whenever they get upset?

In GHOST RIDER #1, he steals a truck.

In GHOST RIDER #3, he becomes a murderer, intentionally killing Dawson, and probably accidentally hurting innocent people in the truck that got smashed.

In GHOST RIDER #4, he commits three crimes in a single issue. First he risks the lives of more policemen who are trying to bring him to justice. (Let me state here that I am no police lover, but in this case, Johnny Blaze is doing more wrong than they are.) Secondly, he makes a deal with a crook named Jensen who makes a deal with the police to get Blaze off the hook. I didn't like it when Spiro Agnew made a deal to get out of paying for his crimes, and I don't like it when Marvel characters do it, either. Thirdly, and worst of all, Johnny Blaze kills again. He takes the law into his own hands and burns a man to death. True, the man was an assassin, but his punishment was for the courts to decide. In almost all cases, capital punishment is illegal anyway, and death by fire is a particularly cruel way to die.

I admit that there can be no clear-cut definition of what is moral and what isn't, but I hate to think that you are putting up Johnny Blaze to your readers as an example of morality. Are you saying that it's all right to drive dangerously, steal cars, and kill people? I say it's not.

Here's hoping Johnny Blaze gets sent to jail.

Richard Nathan
2002 Fourth Street, Apt. #208
Santa Monica, Calif. 90405

Some philosophers have argued, Rich, that one reason the Russians might be less apt to start a world-dooming nuclear war than would the Americans...is that the Russians as a people do not believe in an afterlife, i.e., they have no reason to believe that if their population is wiped out, they will all meet again, at some far-off Pearly Gate.

Johnny Blaze, on the other hand, is absolutely certain that there is a life after death, that both God and Satan exist. Thus, from his point of view, you must remember, when he kills a villain, he is doing no more than sending him to his just reward — or punishment. A reward or punishment he knows exists outside this mortal coil!

Please note: we're not offering that as a definitive explanation of some of the Ghost Rider's rather unorthodox behavior. Among other things, it's a little unsettling to consider that belief in a life after death might make the life before death seem a little less precious.

So let's consider some of the other possibilities, too.

Johnny Blaze sold his soul to the devil in order to save the soul of Crash Simpson. In so doing, he learned that Satan and Hell actually do exist. When he was later cheated by Satan, who took the life of Crash Simpson in spite of his bargain with Johnny, Blaze rebelled — and because he was protected by the aura of goodness about Roxanne, Satan was unable to capture Johnny's soul. So, instead, he decided to torment him, by forcing him to become a cycle-riding demon every nightfall.

Now, if all that happened to you — what sort of shape do you figure your mind might be left in? In other words — it's a very real possibility that Johnny lives every moment on the brink of insanity. Perhaps that, in fact, is the real torment which Satan has inflicted upon him; perhaps the creation of the Ghost Rider was merely a means to that end.

All of which lends quite a bit of support to the thesis that George Williams advanced earlier on this page: that Johnny Blaze is caught dead center in the war between good and evil, in a no-man's land where light and darkness blend into sullen greys, where evil means sometimes seem the only way to achieve good ends — even though that philosophy has been proved totally unsound.

Frankly, we don't know the answer to this dilemma. And we're not even certain there is a definite answer. We'd be interested in hearing other readers' ideas on the matter.

Meantime, let's lend our attention to a somewhat less earth-shaking, but nevertheless interesting question.

Dear Marvel,

If the Ghost Rider's body can burst into flames like the Human Torch's, then why can't G.R. fly like the Torch, and why don't his clothes burn away?

Brian Trautman
322-Liberty Street
Butler, Pa. 16001

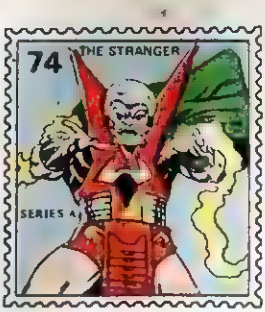
This one's easy, Brain — sort of.

Fact is, the Ghost Rider's body does not burst into flame "like the Human Torch's." It's a totally different kind of flame. The Torch's flame is a purely physical phenomenon. It's pretty weird, of course, but it's still just regular-ol' fire.

Ghost Rider's flame, on the other hand, is of occult origin. As nearly as we can tell, it doesn't burn — or even give off much heat — unless G.R. wants it to. It's just not subject to natural law.

And that's all the space we have this ish. 'Til next time, remember — these are your pages for your letters and comments and suggestions and ideas. WRITE!

BIG THINGS ARE COMING FROM MARVEL! WATCH FOR 'EM··· 'NUFF SAID!



THIS IS IT! YOUR MARVEL VALUE STAMP FOR THIS ISSUE! CLIP 'EM AND COLLECT 'EM!

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MONUMENTAL MEMOS OF CHILLERS, THRILLERS, AND FILLERS!

STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

If you happened to miss the ol' Soap box last ish, it's because I was in sunny Italy and didn't return in time to write it. But don't think I deserted you, O True Believer! I was there on your behalf, and now that I'm back I'm just bustin' to tell you about the fun and excitement of the biggest comic-book convention of them all. About 200 miles south of Milan, in the beautiful, ancient city of Lucca, they've been holding an annual comic-book congress for the past eight years. This year's Lucca 9 was the biggest yet. The whole town played host to writers and artists from all over the world. There were shows, panels, exhibits, and ceremonies lasting an entire week. Inside the main auditorium the seats were equipped with earphones through which you could hear translations of every speech in virtually every language. It was like being at the U.N., but lots more fun. And if those wild, warm, and wonderful Italians aren't the friendliest people around, then Thor bleaches his hair! But the thing that impressed me most—the thing I want you to know, is—in Europe comics are taken far more seriously by the adult population than in America. If you didn't know Lucca 9 was comic-book oriented you'd have thought it was a business convention. The adults, including the Mayor of Lucca himself, far outnumbered the youngsters in attendance. There were professors, businessmen, scientists, filmmakers, lawyers, and literally hundreds of other mature, serious fans deeply involved in one of the most popular art forms of all—the ubiquitous comic-strip! So here's to all of Marvel's fabulous friends in Lucca, and throughout the free world. So long as we strangers from different lands can come together in good will and mutual respect, so long as art can help to forge a lasting bond between people and nations; then so long shall there still be hope for an abiding peace upon this troubled earth.

Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM! We've lots of bombshells to explode this time around, so let's get rolling, shall we—?

ITEM! The big news this month - and we do mean big - is a fabulous pair of new mags sporting 52 great pages for just 35¢! That's right—our swingin' Summer-of-'73 Specials were such a rousing success and so many of you requested more of the same, that we began work almost at once on a regular line of 35-centers. The only difference is, these new titles will contain mostly new stories and art, plus a whole passle of bonus features such as pin ups, interviews, and more surprises than you can shake a Forbush at! The first of these mind-benders has already been on sale for a few weeks now, the first far-out issue of GIANT SIZE SUPER STARS, headlining the *Fantastic Four*, no less (with the ever incredible Hulk as guest star)! As those of you who purchased this sell-out sensation already know, SUPER-STARS is a *monthly* mag, featuring no less than three rotating series, in the style of those Mystery Movies that've taken TV by storm. The F.F. led off the parade, of course, and this month's second slam-bang issue heralds the much requested team up of two of the most monstrous super villains of all -- Morbius, the Living Vampire, and the menacing Man-Wolf (alias John Jameson), against none other than your friendly neighborhood *Spider-Man!* While the third ish, on sale in April, will star still another of Marvel's mightiest: *Conan the Barbarian!* Then, the whole cycle will start all over again, with the F.F., Spidey, and Conan each appearing four times a year, in some of the most spectacular sagas ever recorded — we kid you not!

That's GIANT-SIZE SUPER STARS, still on sale — if you're lucky!

Got it? Okay, then you're all set for our next scoop!

ITEM! Our second magnificent new 35¢ mag has a title nearly as mind-boggling as the first: it's GIANT-SIZE CHILLERS and it debuts March 12, starring (who else?) the one and only *Dracula* himself! But, this sinister series is called "The *Curse* of Dracula," and it'll be a wee bit different from the Lord of Vampires other Marvel misadventures, for it'll deal mainly with those whose lives are touched by our blood thirsting Count in some way, beginning with Dracula's very own *daughter*, as depicted on this self-same page! (Don't worry, though — our Transylvanian terror will appear prominently in each and every one of these tales!) And, since our new monthly CHILLERS mag has the same format as SUPER-STARS, Drac's new fear-fests will alternate with those of two other baneful new lights in the Marvel firmament: Werewolf By Night, and the macabre Man Thing! All in GIANT-SIZE SUPER CHILLERS!

Hope that's all clear, Flame-Keeper 'Cause as of right now — you're on your own!

ITEM! And, sharing the limelight with these two blockbusters, have we got news for you! SAVAGE TALES is coming back for the third time — and this time, we're gonna go 'way out on a limb and predict that this most-honored Marvel mag is here to stay! In fact, we're so sure of it that we've already scheduled it for bi-monthly publications, like our other 75¢ titles, with the first of the new series going on sale March 26! There'll be brand new, grand new Conan sagas by the likes of Barry Smith, John Buscema, Gil Kane, and Neal Adams — special items of interest to sword-and-sorcery swashbucklers the world over — plus a phantasmagorical new feature on the greatest fantasy films of all time! Now, if that isn't 'nuff said, we don't know what is!

ITEM! Whew! We've just room enough to tell you that a couple of other new series make their debut this month as well. One is *The Living Mummy*, who returns as the star of SUPERNATURAL THRILLERS, where he made his first foray a few months back. The other is The Golem, whose stomping grounds (and we mean just that!) will be STRANGE TALES. All this -- plus an extra-special issue of WORLDS UNKNOWN featuring an awesome adaptation of Columbia Pictures' new thriller, "The Golden Voyage of Sinbad!" Need we say it? It's the Marvel Age of Comics all over again!

ITEM! Due to a last minute emergency, we had to forego our widely-acclaimed Bullpen Bonus Page this go-round. So, we'll have to wait till next month to tell you all about the brain-blasting bargains that'll be yours when you've amassed a complete set of MARVEL VALUE STAMPS — or about some of the hectic hijinx which the World's Weirdest Bullpen have been up to — not to mention the return of our capricious Checklist. Next time, though, we promise you two full pages of Marvel news and views! Just wait and see!

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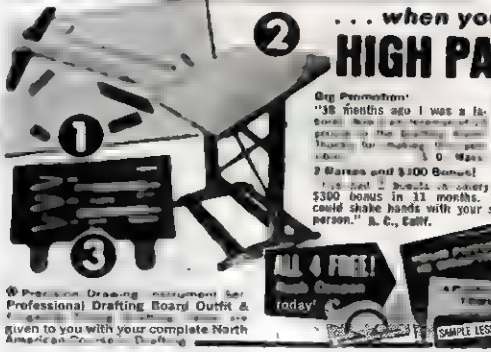

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--BUT NOW YOU'RE JUST GONNA BE JAIL BAIT!
YOUR OBSESSION WITH ZODIAC STILL DOES NOT INTEREST ME, MORTAL!
LORD! THAT FLAME, IT CAME RIGHT FROM YOUR FINGER!
WHOOSH!
YOU SET MY GUN AFIRE! BUT NO BLEMISH OF HAND FLAME THROWER COULD BE THAT MOP! IT JUST ISN'T POSSIBLE! UNLESS..
WITCH TRICK!
STAY BACK, BLAZE! IF YOU DO HAVE SOME SUPERNATURAL POWER YOU ARE GOING TO HELP ME AGAINST ZODIAC--
--OR I'LL STRANGLE YOUR DARLING MISS SIMPSON!
JOHNNY!
HAVE A CARE, MORTAL! YOU RISK THE SWIFT TERMINATION OF YOUR WORTHLESS LIFE IF YOU HARM THE GIRL!
DAVE! DON'T HURT HER! WHEN I FOLLOWED YOU TO THIS PLACE I NEVER DREAMED...
SAVE YOUR BREATH, MR. BARNETT, UNLESS YOU CAN CONVINCE YOUR SON TO RELEASE ROXANNE--
--BEFORE I REDUCE HIM TO ASHES!

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YOU'RE BLUFFIN', SPOOK-MAN! AS LONG AS THERE'S A CHANCE I CAN KILL HER BEFORE YOU CAN GET ME, YOU WON'T DO A BLASTED THING--
--AND THAT MEANS I DON'T LET GO UNTIL YOU PROMISE TO HELP ME GET ZODIAC!
JOHNNY, DON'T DO ANYTHING. HE'S MAD!
MAD OR NO, IF HE HARMS HER...
IT'S MY FAULT I SHOULD'VE SEEN IT COMING. GOTTEN HIM PSYCHIATRIC HELP BEFORE HE SNAPPED!
YOU SAW YOUR SON'S INSANITY COMING? AND YOU DID NOTHING?
"YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. HE'S GOT GOOD REASON TO HATE ZODIAC. TWO YEARS AGO, HE WAS A NEW YORK BASED F.B.I. AGENT. THEY CAPTURED HIM, TORTURED HIM...
...UNTIL HE BROKE, TOLD THEM ALL HE KNEW ABOUT THE CITY'S DEFENSES.
"IT WAS THIS INFORMATION THAT ENABLED ZODIAC TO ACTUALLY CAPTURE NEW YORK CITY FOR A TIME."
"AVENGERS #82--R.T.
AFTER THEY GOT THROUGH WITH HIM, HE WASN'T ANY GOOD TO THE F.B.I.--THEY BOUNCED HIM. ALL HE'S THOUGHT ABOUT SINCE THEN IS TO GET ZODIAC..
YOU KNEW THIS? THEN FIND ROXANNE BEFORE HE HARMS HER, MR. BARNETT...
...OR YOU SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHATEVER HAPPENS TO YOUR SON!
SEARCH ALL YOU WANT, FATHER! YOU WON'T FIND HER, NOT UNTIL BLAZE AGREES TO HELP ME GET ZODIAC!
BARNETT...
I'LL FIND HER, SOMEHOW, I'LL FIND HER!
COME ON, HERO! THE SPOTLIGHT'S ON YOU! ARE YOU GOING TO HELP ME FIGHT ZODIAC? OR DOES THE GIRL DIE?

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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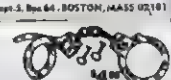

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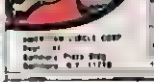

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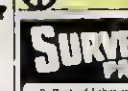

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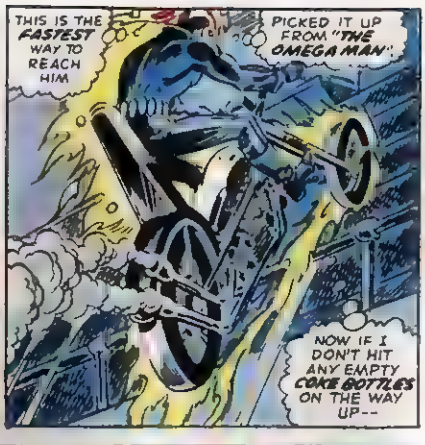
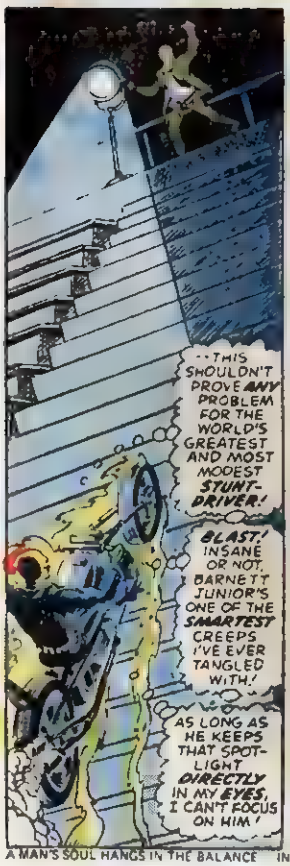
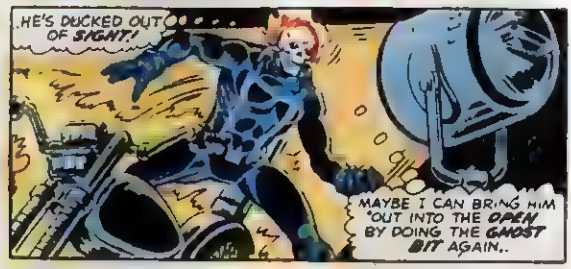
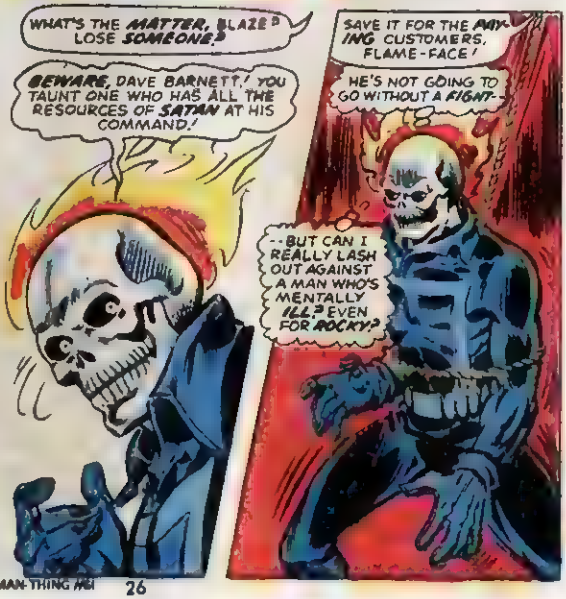
OKAY, WITH SENIOR SEARCHING FOR MY LADY AND JUNIOR TOO FAR AWAY TO REALLY SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING--
--I CAN CONJURE UP MY FLAMING CYCLE!




--THIS SHOULDN'T PROVE ANY PROBLEM FOR THE WORLD'S GREATEST AND MOST MODEST STUNT-DRIVER!
BLAST! INSANE OR NOT, BARNETT JUNIOR'S ONE OF THE SMARTEST CREEPS I'VE EVER TANGLED WITH!
AS LONG AS HE KEEPS THAT SPOTLIGHT DIRECTLY IN MY EYES, I CAN'T FOCUS ON HIM!




WHAT'S THE MATTER, BLAZE? LOSE SOMEONE?
BEWARE, DAVE BARNETT! YOU TAUNT ONE WHO HAS ALL THE RESOURCES OF SATAN AT HIS COMMAND!
SAVE IT FOR THE AMAZING CUSTOMERS, FLAME-FACE!
HE'S NOT GOING TO GO WITHOUT A FIGHT--
--BUT CAN I REALLY LASH OUT AGAINST A MAN WHO'S MENTALLY ILL? EVEN FOR ROCKY?

A MAN'S SOUL HANGS IN THE BALANCE IN MAN-THING #21

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NOW THIS IS INTERESTING! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD ROPE A GHOST!
YOU'RE A WASH-OUT IN THE SPOOK DEPARTMENT, BLAZE!
HAD ENOUGH? OR DO I HAVE TO ADDTIE YOU?
I HAVE NOT--
--HAD ENOUGH.
NO, MORTAL
PERHAPS IT COULD HAVE ONLY COME DOWN TO THIS, A BRUTALLY PHYSICAL COMBAT
FOR THESE MEN ARE TOO ALIKE
BOTH ARE VICTIMS OF EVIL
BOTH HAVE BEEN CHANGED BY EVIL
BOTH DIED A LITTLE AS THEIR BODIES MINDS, AND SOULS WERE BENT AND TWISTED OUT OF SHAPE
AND ONLY ONE WAS SURVIVED--
--EVEN IN PART.
PERHAPS THAT DETERMINES THE OUTCOME OF THIS.
PERHAPS NOT
THAT WAS YOUR LAST CHANCE, BLAZE!
YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO SEE YOUR GIRL-FRIEND AGAIN!
NO, DAVE BARNETT, IT WAS YOUR FINAL CHANCE. I WASTE NO MORE TIME WITH YOU.
TELL ME WHERE ROXANNE SIMPSON IS -
-NOW!
NO... NO!
GATE 1

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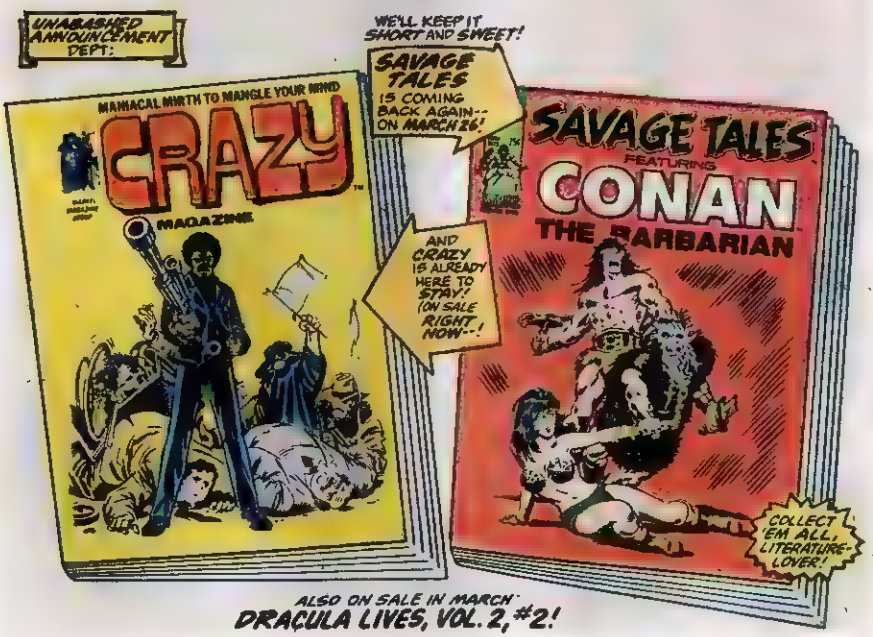
UNABASHED ANNOUNCEMENT DEPT:
WE'LL KEEP IT SHORT AND SWEET!
SAVAGE TALES IS COMING BACK AGAIN--ON MARCH 26!
MANIACAL MIRTH TO MANGLE YOUR MIND
CRAZY
MAGAZINE
AND CRAZY IS ALREADY HERE TO STAY! (ON SALE RIGHT NOW--!
SAVAGE TALES
FEATURING
CONAN
THE BARBARIAN
COLLECT 'EM ALL, LITERATURE-LOVER!
ALSO ON SALE IN MARCH
DRACULA LIVES, VOL. 2, #2!

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TANK TRAP COMPLETE GAME
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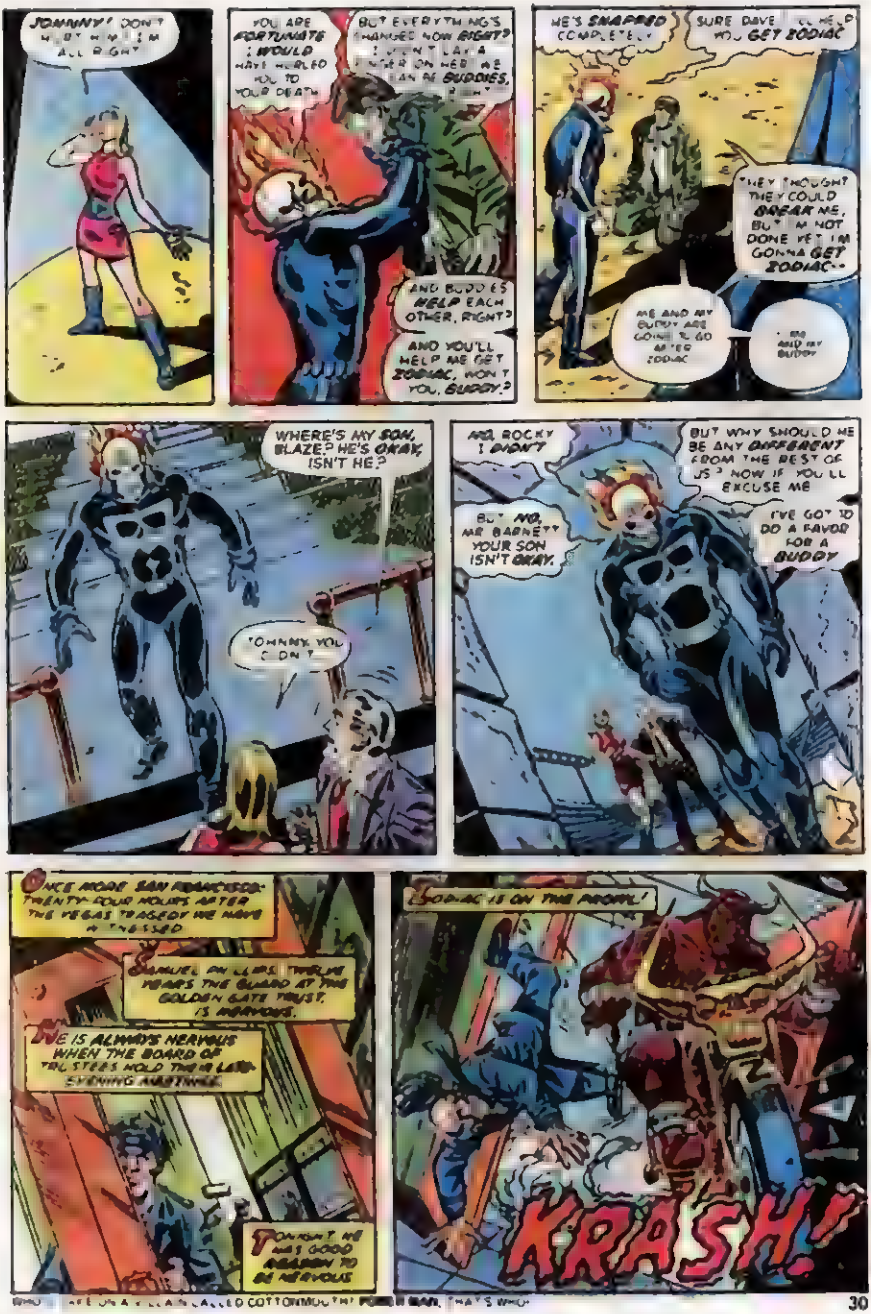
JOHNNY! DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME! I'M ALL RIGHT
YOU ARE FORTUNATE I WOULD HAVE HURLED YOU TO YOUR DEATH
BUT EVERYTHING'S CHANGED NOW, RIGHT? I WON'T LAY A FINGER ON HER! WE CAN BE BUDDIES, RIGHT?
AND BUDDIES HELP EACH OTHER, RIGHT?
AND YOU'LL HELP ME GET ZODIAC, WON'T YOU, BUDDY?
HE'S SNAPPED COMPLETELY
SURE DAVE I'LL HELP YOU GET ZODIAC
THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD BAMF ME, BUT I'M NOT DONE YET! I'M GONNA GET ZODIAC--
ME AND MY BUDDY ARE GOING TO GET ZODIAC
ME AND MY BUDDY
WHERE'S MY SON, BLAZE? HE'S OKAY, ISN'T HE?
"JOHNNY, YOU CAN'T
MR. ROCKY I DIDN'T
BUT NO, MR BARNETT YOUR SON ISN'T OKAY.
BUT WHY SHOULD WE BE ANY DIFFERENT FROM THE REST OF US? NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME
I'VE GOT TO DO A FAVOR FOR A BUDDY
ONCE MORE SAN FRANCISCO- TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER THE VEGAS TRAGEDY WE HAVE A TRUSSED
SAMUEL CLEMENS, WHO FOR YEARS TENDED THE GUARD AT THE GOLDEN GATE TRUST, IS NERVOUS.
HE IS ALWAYS NERVOUS WHEN THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES HOLD THEIR LATE EVENING MEETINGS.
I DON'T HE HAS GOOD REASON TO BE NERVOUS
ZODIAC IS ON THE PROWL!
KRASH!
AND A CLAN CALLED COTTONMOUTH! POISON BAR, THAT'S WHO!

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LISTEN TO ME, GOOD BANKERS! IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE INJURED, DO EXACTLY AS I SAY.
I WANT YOU TO OPEN UP CORNELIUS VAN LUNT'S SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX, AND DON'T BE SLOW, MY FRIENDS.
BUT AREN'T YOU, MR. VAN LUNT,? THE PAPERS SAID... OH DEAR... AREN'T YOU IN JAIL,?
THIS IS SO CONFUSING.
SCREEE
I'VE NO TIME FOR CONFUSION.
OPEN THE VAULT!
WE CAN'T. IT'S A TIME LOCK!
IT WON'T OPEN UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING!
TIME LOCK, HMM,? AND YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY TOO FRIGHTENED TO BE LYING TO ME, AREN'T YOU,?
YES, SIR! I MEAN...
LUCKILY, I PREPARED FOR EVERY DIFFICULTY.
KLIK!
I DO HOPE THE NOISE WON'T DISTURB YOU.
OH, AND PLEASE RECALL THIS GUN...
...BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING FOOLISH!
WROOMM
THAT WEIRD RAY...
IT'S SLICING RIGHT THROUGH THE VAULT DOOR!
WHAT IS IT,?
SIZZLEE!
IT'S PURE ENERGY, GOOD BANKERS-- TAPPED FROM THE STARS THEMSELVES!
ROARRR!

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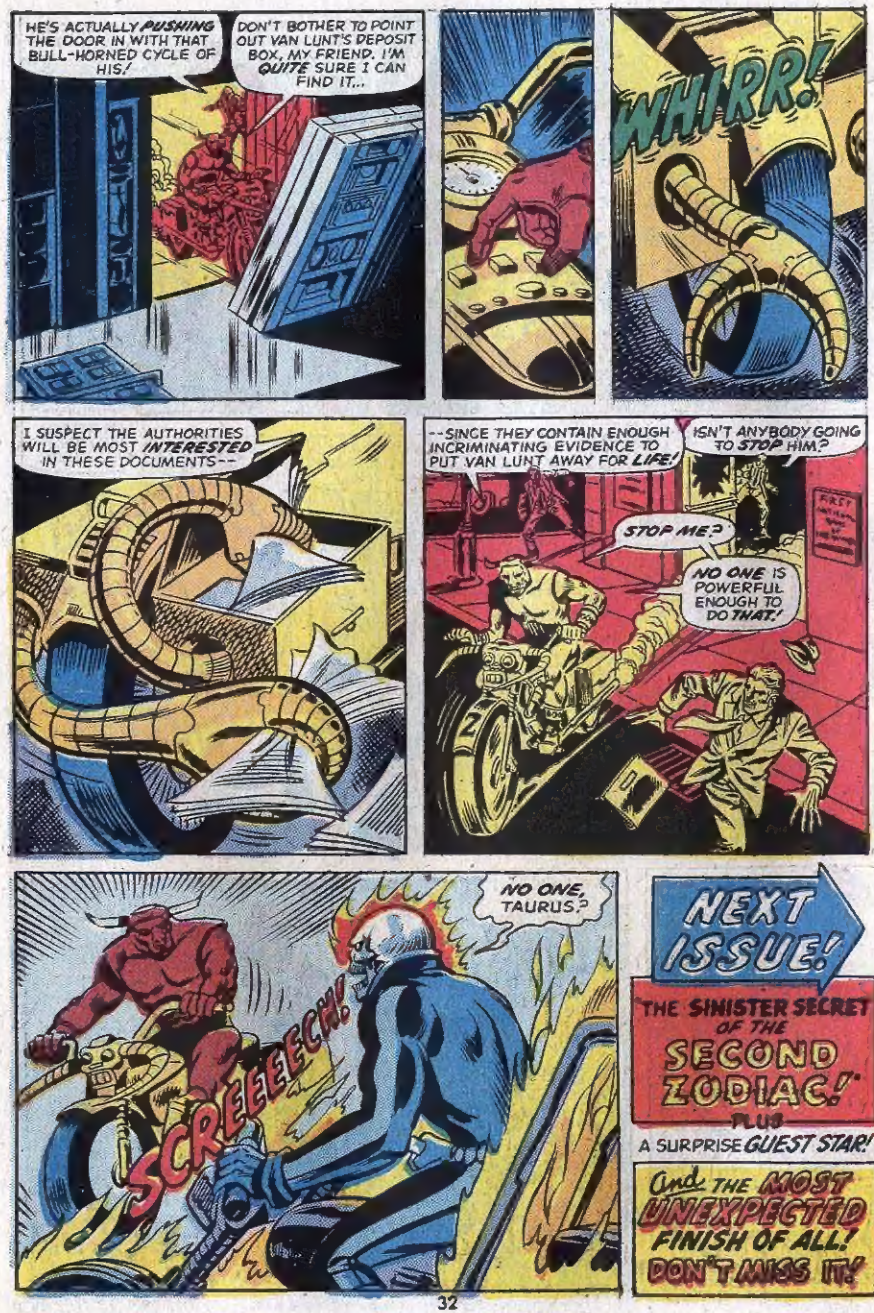
HE'S ACTUALLY PUSHING THE DOOR IN WITH THAT BULL-HORNED CYCLE OF HIS!
DON'T BOTHER TO POINT OUT VAN LUNT'S DEPOSIT BOX, MY FRIEND. I'M QUITE SURE I CAN FIND IT...
WHIRR!
I SUSPECT THE AUTHORITIES WILL BE MOST INTERESTED IN THESE DOCUMENTS--
--SINCE THEY CONTAIN ENOUGH INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE TO PUT VAN LUNT AWAY FOR LIFE!
ISN'T ANYBODY GOING TO STOP HIM?
STOP ME?
NO ONE IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DO THAT!
NO ONE, TAURUS.
SCREEEECH!
NEXT ISSUE!
THE SINISTER SECRET OF THE SECOND ZODIAC!
PLUS
A SURPRISE GUEST STAR!
And THE MOST UNEXPECTED FINISH OF ALL! DON'T MISS IT!

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☐ Mrs.
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Please Print

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Last year some folks made only $25 to $50 while others made $150—$250—$500 and more selling our entire line. Many church groups, organizations, schools, lodges, etc. do this year after year. Everybody buys greeting cards.

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